

I n t r o d u c t i o n

California is one of the most biologically diverse areas in the world and within its borders, harbors more unique plants and animals than any other state. The diversity of climates and landscapes — and all the barriers to migrations such as rivers, mountains, and deserts — have led over thousands of years to the evolution of a large number of isolated species and varieties of animals, many of which are found only here. For example, about 30,000 species of insects have been identified here, 63 freshwater fishes, 46 amphibians, 96 reptiles, 563 birds, 190 mammals, and about 8,000 plants. At the same time, California's extraordinary diversity is being lost in many important habitats statewide. On average, over 20 percent of the naturally occurring species of amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals are classified as endangered, threatened, or "of special concern" under state and federal laws. Unless well-planned, new development will take a toll on biodiversity, as it fragments landscapes and habitat.

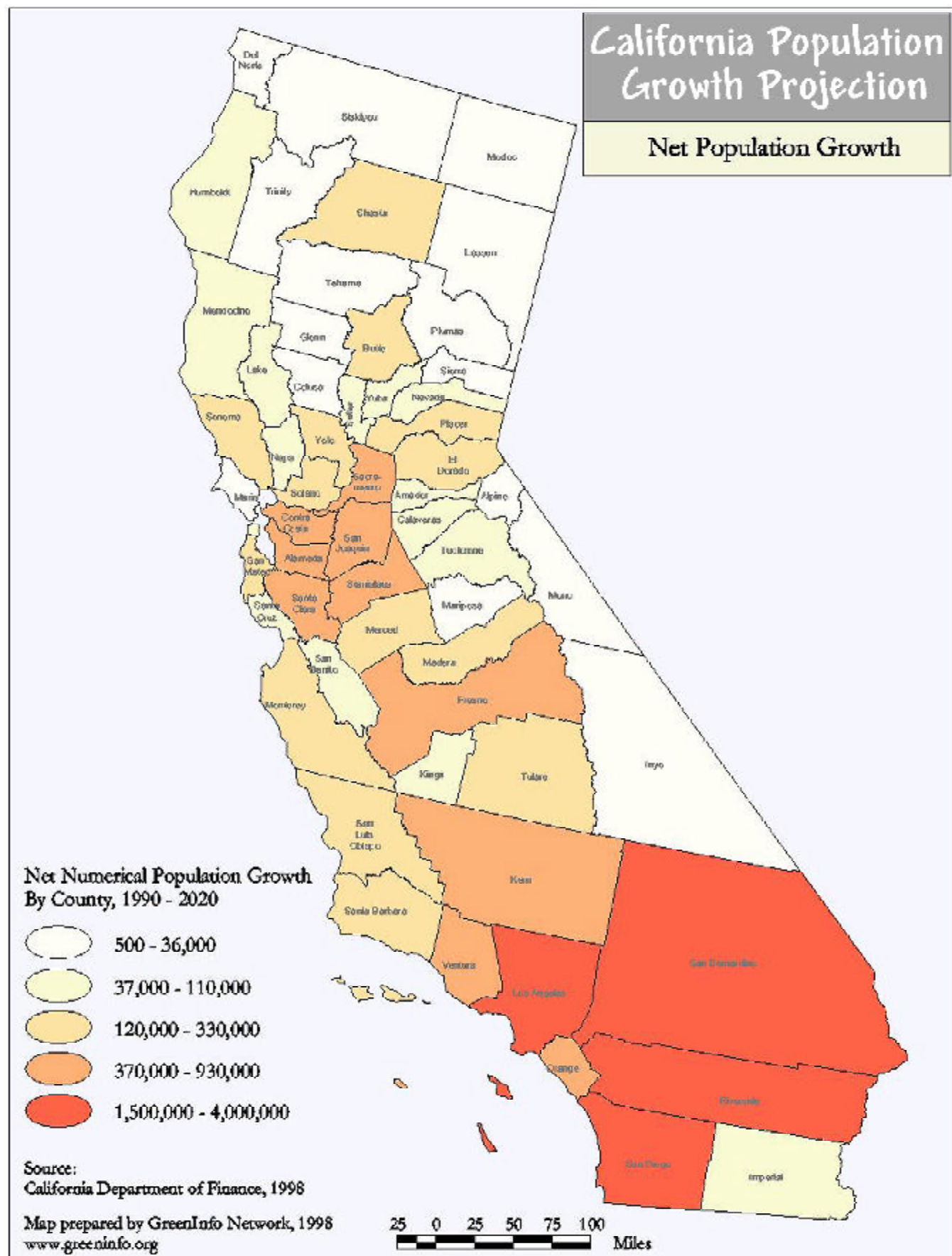
With over 32 million residents, California is already the nation's most populous state. About one of every eight residents of the United States lives in California. In response to both demographic and economic pressures, California has become the most urbanized state in the union, with more than 80 percent of all residents living in metropolitan areas of at least one million people. By the year 2020, the state's population is projected to increase by nearly 40 percent — or 15 million people — an amount equivalent to adding the present populations of Arizona, Nevada, Oregon, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado and Utah to California's 160,000 square miles (see figures 1-3). Nearly 70 percent of Californians already live within 60 miles of the coastline, heavily affecting coastal wetlands and sage scrub habitat. While growth is occurring at

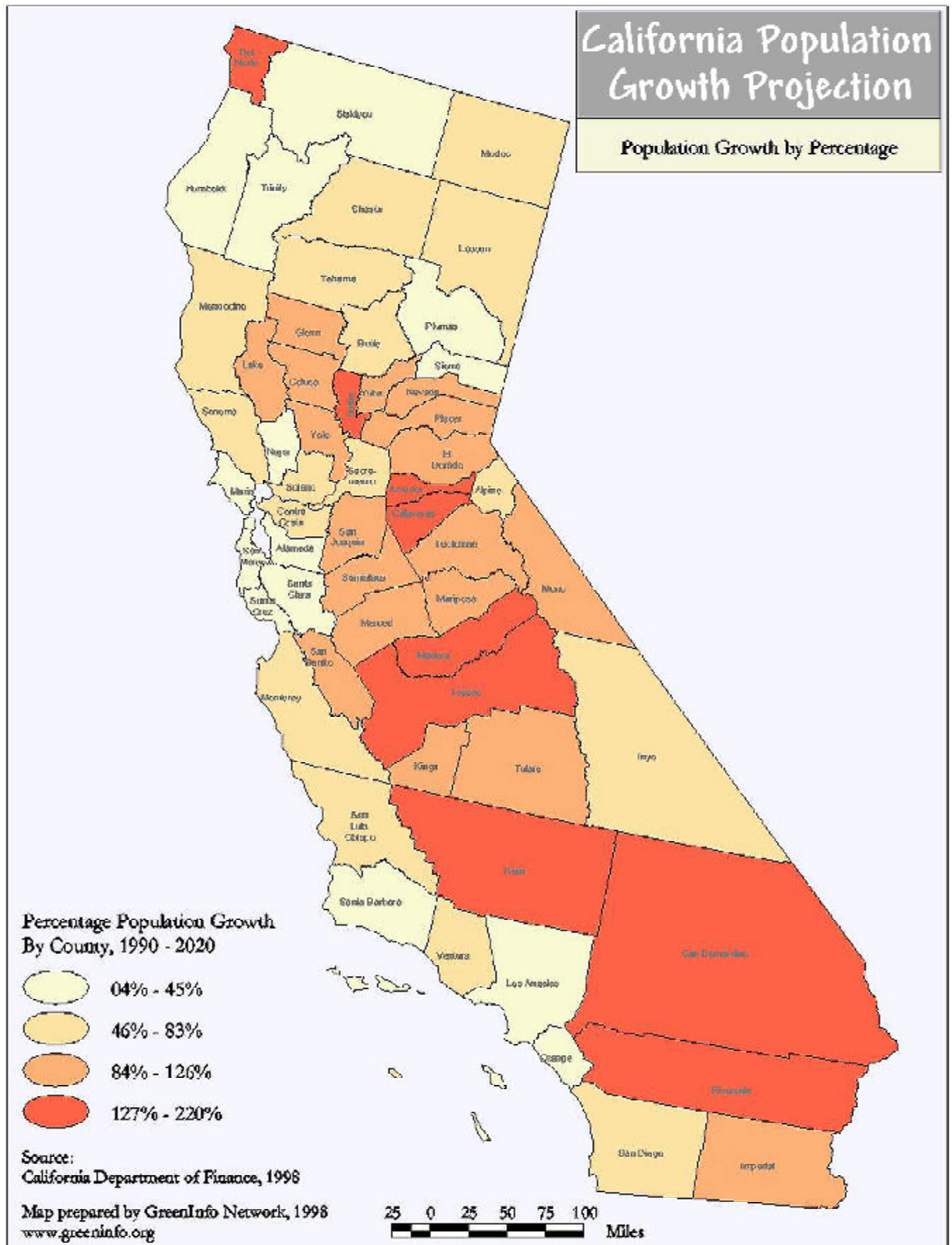
different rates statewide, new habitats and ecosystems will need protection, as people are moving to the deserts, foothills, or woodlands in search of affordable housing and a secure environment.

Protecting California's natural lands and waters is an essential investment to ensuring a strong economy and quality of life for the future. The California Environmental Dialogue, a diverse group of corporate, environmental, and government leaders, recently concluded that "a vision for the 21st century must recognize that California's habitats and natural communities are an integral part of the economic foundation upon which future prosperity depends." The state's population and abundant natural resources have helped create a trillion-dollar economy, which according to the California Trade and Commerce Agency, ranks seventh among world economic powers. California's economy is now surging at a record rate after suffering the worst downturn since the Great Depression.

The state's robust expansion in cutting-edge industries such as computers and multi-media software require large amounts of water, a resource as valued as gold in California. Water, of course, is essential to California's estimated \$29 billion agricultural industry. In addition to the loss of wetlands and terrestrial habitat, the conversion of prime farmland to urban development is a matter of concern because our fertile soils produce 40 percent of the country's fruits and vegetables, and export to many parts of the world.

The need to conserve our natural heritage is obvious, and not surprisingly, multi-faceted. While this publication primarily concerns itself with the preservation of valuable wildlife habitat, let there be no mistake regarding the essential interdependence between economic and environmental well-being for future generations of Californians.



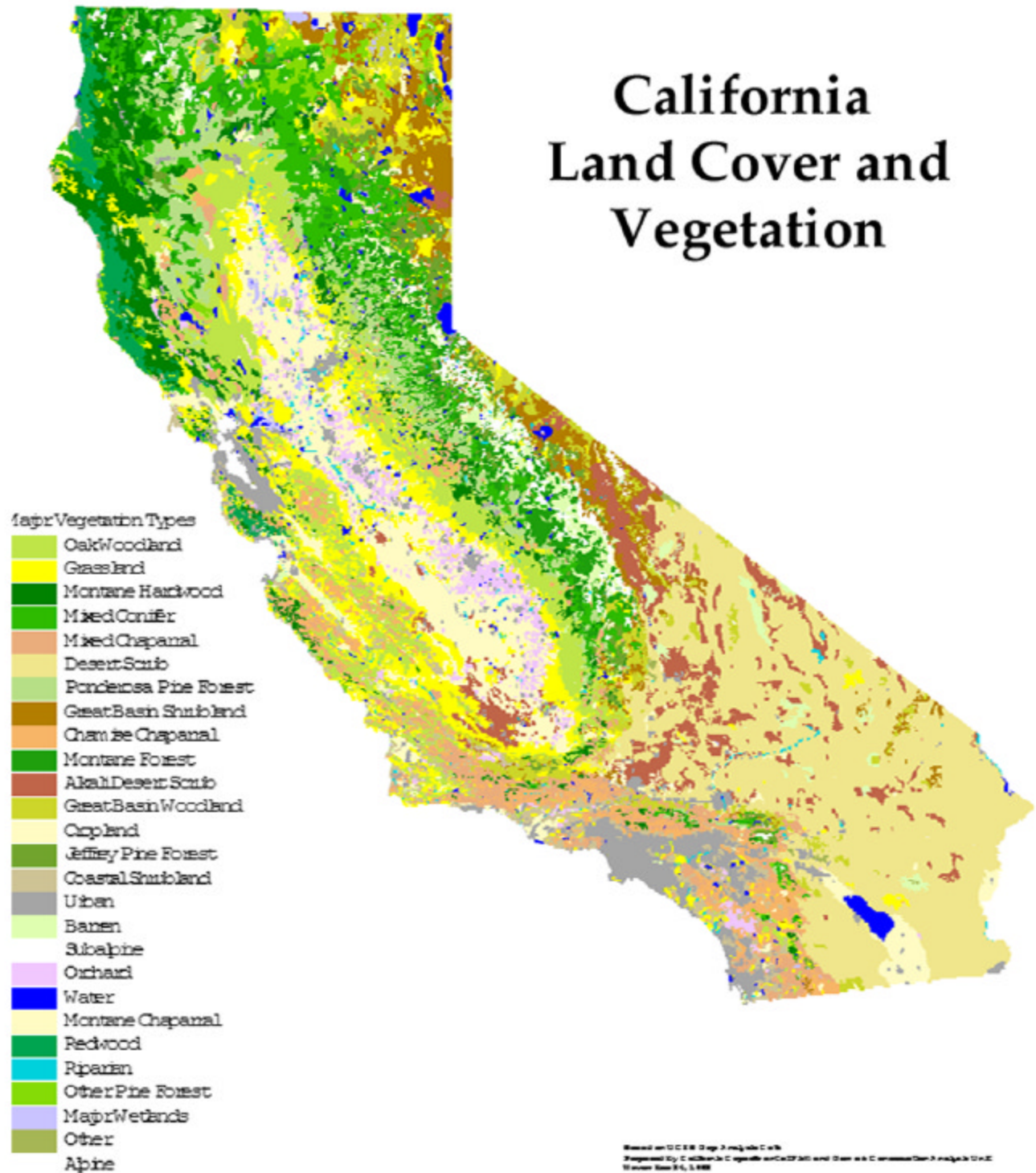


Bioregional Population Projections 1990–2020

Bioregion	July 1990	July 1996	July 2000	July 2010	July 2020
<i>California</i>	29,944,045	32,383,000	34,704,000	40,939,000	47,507,000
<i>South Coast</i>	13,831,000	14,741,100	15,540,600	17,681,800	19,928,500
<i>Bay Area/Delta</i>	6,052,000	6,502,800	6,809,500	7,488,900	8,031,100
<i>San Joaquin Valley</i>	2,768,200	3,123,500	3,526,300	4,607,800	5,838,400
<i>Mojave</i>	2,631,300	2,985,900	3,371,400	4,597,400	6,010,500
<i>Central Coast</i>	1,883,900	1,987,000	2,110,900	2,459,900	2,829,000
<i>Sacramento Valley</i>	1,737,200	1,877,250	2,054,500	2,502,400	2,967,800
<i>Sierra</i>	559,920	631,960	717,400	918,400	1,110,200
<i>Klamath/North Coast</i>	332,300	349,650	376,500	445,400	512,600
<i>Colorado Desert</i>	110,800	141,200	152,300	185,200	222,600
<i>Modoc</i>	37,425	42,650	4,500	51,100	56,700

Source: *Department of Finance, April 1997 and CDF/FRAP, 1998*

California Land Cover and Vegetation



ACREAGE PER BIOREGION

State of California

<i>Name of Bioregion</i>	<i>Acres in Bioregion</i>
Bay/Delta	6,001,579
Central Coast	8,278,864
Colorado Desert	6,759,743
Klamath/North Coast	14,387,696
Modoc	8,323,619
Mojave	19,936,854
Sacramento Valley	3,952,294
San Joaquin Valley	8,218,273
Sierra	18,300,592
South Coast	7,064,246
<i>Total Acreage</i>	<i>101,223,760</i>